

Application No. 10/045,247

Amendment dated January 7, 2005

Reply to Office Communication of December 22, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended). A process of providing permanently distressed texture to a nonwoven fabric comprising the steps of:

- a. providing a precursor fibrous nonwoven web, wherein said precursor web is comprised of a blend of: synthetic fibers, selected from the group consisting of polyamide, polyesters, polyolefins, and combinations thereof; and natural fibers consisting of cotton, wood pulp, rayon, lyocell, and combinations thereof;
- b. providing a three-dimensional image transfer device;
- c. hydroentangling said precursor web on said image transfer device to form a patterned and imaged nonwoven fabric;
- d. laundering said formed patterned and imaged nonwoven fabric to cause slippage between the fibers of the fabric;
- e. said patterned and imaged nonwoven fabric taking on a distressed or wrinkled appearance by virtue of said slippage between fibers of said fabric; and
- f. forming said nonwoven fabric into a roll subsequent to said laundering step₁

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wherein increasing the level of hydroentangling during said hydroentangling steps acts to diminish the slippage between fibers of the fabric during said laundering step.

Claim 2 (canceled).

Claim 3 (canceled).

Claim 4 (previously presented). A process of making a permanently distressed textured nonwoven fabric as in claim 1, wherein said synthetic fiber is polyester.

Claim 5 (canceled).

Claim 6 (original). A process of making a permanently distressed textured nonwoven fabric as in claim 1, wherein said nonwoven fabric is suitable for use in the apparel industry as a bottom weight or in the home fashions industry as a window covering, bed covering, or furniture cover.

Claim 7 (canceled).

Claim 8 (previously presented). A bottom weight garment comprising an imaged nonwoven fabric formed in accordance with the process of claim 1, said bottom weight garment having a jet dyed finish and a distressed appearance upon laundering, said bottom weight garment having a basis weight of 3.0-8.0 ounces per square yard and a fiber composition of cotton and polyester.

Claim 9 (previously presented). A home fashion articles comprising an imaged nonwoven fabric formed in accordance with the process of claim 1, said home fashion

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article having a jet dyed and/or printed finish as well as distressed appearance upon laundering, said home fashion article having a basis weight of 1.0-3.0 ounces per square yard and a fiber composition of polyester and lyocell or rayon fibers.